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SUBJECT: BUSINESS SEMINARS SET FOR FIVE TURKISH CITIES

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED.

11. (SBU) U.S. Chamber of Commerce officials visited Turkey June 12-16 to settle the final details of a five-city series of trade outreach seminars aimed at small and medium-sized Turkish firms. The Chamber will implement the one-day long seminars jointly with Turkey's leading business association, the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (TOBB) and with local chambers in the five cities. The two organizations agreed on a budget under which TOBB or the local chambers will pay for the costs of interpretation and catering for the five events. The Chamber's portion of the overall budget, including transportation and per diem for visiting experts from the United States and publication of a "guide book" and website on doing business with the United States, will be supported by \$200,000 out of a \$400,000 business development grant extended by USAID using ESF funds to the Carana Corporation.

12. (SBU) The events will be held on July 24 and 26 in Ankara and Kayseri and September 11 and 13 in Izmir and Gazianetep, with the final event September 15 in Istanbul. The draft agenda includes sessions on,

- 1) Success stories of Turkish businesses in the United States.
- 2) Overviews of key sectors in each of the five cities and the potential of those sectors in the U.S. market.
- 3) Marketing and brand establishment in the U.S. market.
- 4) Legal, logistical and financial issues involved in exporting to the United States.
- 5) U.S. business resources available to Turkish exporters.

13. (SBU) Throughout the day there will be opportunities for networking and relationship building. The U.S. Chamber and TOBB expect a total of up to 900 Turkish businesses to participate. TOBB will rely on local chambers of commerce and industry as well as on its own resources to develop a comprehensive invitation list of companies that demonstrate potential to enter the U.S. market. U.S. Chamber-recruited participants include representatives of U.S. marketing companies and business associations, law firms, shipping companies and banks, leaders of state and local chambers of commerce, and U.S. Government (FCS and OPIC) representatives. Both the Chamber and TOBB say they hope that these events will lead to long-term cooperation and partnership between the two organizations.

14. (SBU) Comment. The United States has lost market share as Turkey's economy and trade sectors boomed after the 2001 financial crisis. Total Turkish trade grew from \$86 billion to \$190 billion between 2002 and 2005, but trade with the United States rose from just \$6 billion to \$10 billion over the same period. Bringing this project -- which breaks new ground for both the U.S. Chamber and TOBB -- to fruition has not been easy, and Post appreciates the support of USAID. The programs should "show the flag," contribute to the expansion of trade relationships, and seed a long-term relationship between the largest U.S. and Turkish business organizations. The seminars' regional dimension and the focus on SME's is particularly positive in helping develop grassroots support for the bilateral relationship. We expect that all of the events, particularly the opening and closing sessions in Ankara and Istanbul, to generate significant positive press coverage.

WILSON